

# **VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH**

**December 4, 2018**

**1:00 p.m.**

**House Committee Room C  
Ground Floor, Pocahontas Building**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Attending:**

Senators Barbara Favola, Chair; Charles W. “Bill” Carrico Sr.; Dave Marsden  
Delegates Richard “Dickie” Bell, Vice-Chair; Jay Jones, Mark Keam, Chris Peace, Todd  
Pillion  
Citizen members Avohom Carpenter, Deirdre “Dede” Goldsmith, Chris Rehak

### **Not Attending:**

Delegate Emily Brewer

### **Commission on Youth Staff Attending:**

Amy Atkinson, Will Egen, Kathy Gillikin

### **I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks**

*Senator Barbara A. Favola, Chair*

Senator Favola welcomed Commission members and meeting participants and asked for introductions.

### **II. Benefit Cliff and TANF Update**

*S. Duke Storen, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Social Services*

Senator Favola introduced Commissioner Storen. Mr. Storen gave his presentation and showed a video to the Commission on the benefit cliff. During the presentation Sen. Favola inquired about how DSS would possibly respond to the Commission on Youth’s recommendation dealing with a benefit cliff pilot. Mr. Storen suggested that work on a pilot could be done without the Commission supporting a budget amendment. The presentation can be found on the Commission’s website under the December 4 meeting tab.

### **III. Decision Matrix**

*Amy M. Atkinson, Executive Director*

Senator Favola then introduced Amy Atkinson to go through the decision matrix for the following studies:

- Review of Virginia’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program – Workforce Development and Childcare
- School Resource Officers

After the presentation of the draft recommendations the Commission heard public comment.

Public Comment:

The following individual offered oral public comment during the meeting on the Review of Virginia's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program – Workforce Development and Childcare recommendations:

- Vickie Krusie, Virginia League of Social Services Executives, prioritizes the recommendation on welfare stigma, introducing competitive grants for community employment and training programs and improving professional development for TANF or VIEW workers.

No individuals offered oral public comment during the meeting on School Resource Officers recommendations.

The draft and adopted decision matrix can be found on the Commission's website under the November 20 meeting tab. The Commission on Youth approved the following recommendations:

**Review of Virginia's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program – Workforce Development and Childcare**

Recommendation on Welfare Stigma

Amend the *Code of Virginia* to rename the “Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare” (VIEW) to the “Virginia Initiative for Education and Work.” (This full title is currently found in the *Code of Virginia* Sections 2.2-435.8, 2.2-2472, 63.2-100, 63.2-601, 63.2-608, 65.2-101, 65.2-500, 65.2-502, and 65.2-512.)

Recommendations on Parent Education on Financial Literacy and School Readiness Options

Recommendation 1

Request that the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) present to the Commission on Youth the plan mandated by §63.2-226. This *Code* section requires VDSS, in consultation with the Virginia Employment Commission and the Virginia Community College System, to develop and implement a plan to provide to citizens receiving any form of public assistance information regarding courses on financial literacy, offered online or through any other appropriate medium, that are available to such citizens at no cost to them, prior to the 2020 General Assembly Session.

Recommendation 2

Request VDSS to implement self-sufficiency pilots to learn how to make the transition smoother for families and to minimize the “benefit cliff.” The purpose of the pilot is to develop supports that provide a pathway for self-sufficiency through earning a living wage. Pilot programs may allow TANF cash assistance payments to be adjusted depending on the amount of income and services a recipient receives. VDSS shall report

its findings with recommendations to the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees and the Virginia Commission on Youth by November 15, 2020.

### Recommendation 3

Support more parent education on quality child care and the Child Care Subsidy, Virginia Preschool Initiative, Early Head Start, and Head Start Programs for low-income families. Support training for child care workers on how to approach parents about child care quality and available resources in the brief time that they have with parents. Encourage child care workers to provide information to families seeking child care assistance, including the child care microsite address ([www.childcareva.com](http://www.childcareva.com)) with child development information, early intervention services, and the importance of quality child care; a link to a short video on child care quality (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjV5sRivmio>); and the VDSS brochure on “Choosing Quality Child Care.” Explore the possibility of creating a longer video or smart phone application on school readiness resources available and the importance of quality child care, to be available to play on smart phones and in waiting rooms and lobbies (social services’ offices, birthing hospitals, pediatricians’ offices, etc.).

## Recommendations on Workforce Development Programs

### Recommendation 1

Introduce a budget amendment to increase funding to the Virginia Community College System’s “Road to Success in Virginia Program” to assist TANF recipients in obtaining needed job skills and earning credentials that are sought by employers in the local community.

### Recommendation 2

Introduce a budget amendment to provide TANF funding for the Virginia Community College System’s standard credentialing program, “FastForward.” (*A letter to the VDSS will be sent encouraging them to maximize federal dollars in this program*).

### Recommendation 3

Request that VDSS study the subsidized employment program and develop a process that encourages more employers to be involved with the program. Efforts should be made to help link TANF/SNAP recipients to employers with jobs that are in high demand in the marketplace, especially those jobs that provide a living wage. VDSS should develop a process for connecting employers that are willing to provide short-term and intentional training programs that lead to success and self-sufficiency. Request that VDSS report to the Virginia Commission on Youth prior to the 2020 General Assembly Session.

Recommendations on TANF ProgrammingRecommendation 1

Request that VDSS study the different aid categories and income eligibility requirements for TANF. In addition, request that VDSS recommend outcome measures that go beyond work requirements. Success should be measured on long-term earnings and self-sufficiency. Request documentation on successful and unsuccessful strategies and the impacts of child care quality and accessibility has on families and children. Request that VDSS report to the Virginia Commission on Youth prior to the 2020 General Assembly Session.

Recommendation 2

Monitor the TANF Reauthorization: H.R. 5861. Work with the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) to recommend the elimination of outdated regulations that impede TANF workers in assisting TANF recipients to meet work and education requirements.

Recommendations on Staff Professional Development

Support the Virginia Department of Social Services and the League of Social Services Executives to continue their efforts on improving professional development for TANF and VIEW workers. Support recent efforts of the Department to provide job coaching training for TANF and VIEW workers through the community colleges. Encourage the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) workgroup to consider providing enhanced services for the TANF population through this workforce development initiative. Encourage eligibility and benefits services workers to be cross trained.

Recommendations on Child Care SubsidiesRecommendation 1

Request VDSS to develop a six-year plan to eliminate the wait list for fee child care participants.

Recommendation 2

Amend the *Code of Virginia* (§ 63.2-611 C.1.) to provide transitional child care to former TANF recipients participating in an education or training program leading to employment. This would allow former TANF recipients to receive child care services while they are earning a credential or degree to help them become self-sufficient.

Recommendation on Availability and Support of Quality Child Care

Request that VDSS present to the Commission on Youth an update on the Child Care Provider S.T.E.P.S. Program (Shared Training, Education and Professional Development Services) pilot, which seeks to recruit more family child care providers in

underserved/rural areas, especially those with odd-hour, special needs, and infant/toddler care, prior to the 2020 General Assembly Session.

**School Resource Officers**

Recommendations on Threat Assessment and Follow-up Treatment for At-Risk Youth

Recommendation 1

Amend the *Code of Virginia*, the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA), so that community services can be provided to juveniles before they are brought before the court on a complaint or petition. (House Select)

(Support legislation submitted by Speaker's Select Committee)

Recommendation 2

Request the Department of Education identify opportunities to increase access to trauma-informed care within schools and communities, and expand access to trauma-informed training for school, mental health, and law enforcement professionals. (Children's Cabinet)

- a. Promote increased access to telehealth services that will enable students to receive access to care during school hours.
- b. Identify funding streams that may be utilized to achieve this goal.
- c. Support the placement of behavioral interventionist positions in schools. These positions should promote whole-child education and the social and emotional wellbeing of all students, but especially our most at-risk students. These roles should serve as an intermediary between classrooms and administration.

(By letter)

Recommendation 2b

Support legislation defining "behavioral interventionist."

Recommendation 3

Request that the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, in conjunction with the Department of Health, Department of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Education, and advocacy organizations, coordinate and promote educational campaigns and trainings that will help school professionals, students, parents, and caregivers recognize behaviors that could indicate the potential for self-harm, or harm to others. (Children's Cabinet)

- a. Promote student-driven, peer-to-peer, communication campaigns focusing on suicide prevention, recognizing when a peer may be in need of additional support, and "See Something, Say Something" principles. Particular emphasis should be placed on

- educating students, parents or caregivers, school professionals, and others on how to report information and to whom information should be reported.
- b. Local school divisions may consider adopting an anonymous reporting mechanism.
  - c. Develop school-appropriate guidance for school, mental health, and law enforcement professionals on which questions should be asked in order to assess a student's risk-level for harm to self or others.

(By letter)

Recommendation 4

Introduce a budget amendment to dedicate funding to the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety under the Department of Criminal Justice Services to develop cross-disciplinary trainings for schools, law enforcement, and mental health professionals, improve data collection, and enhance information-sharing within the threat assessment team, as well as between threat assessment teams and their partners, including across school divisions. (House Select and Children's Cabinet)

This additional funding is allocated to:

- a. Provide technical assistance to local school divisions on the school climate survey, school safety audit, threat assessment teams, and other public safety practices.
- b. Increase the availability of cross-disciplinary threat assessment training for all involved stakeholders (including community mental health partners) that encompasses key principles from each of the disciplines involved in threat assessment.
- c. Authorize and fund the Center to conduct a single school climate survey in consultation with the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) that encompasses safety, education, and health interests. Survey students and staff in secondary schools (Grades 6-12) on an annual basis. This would reduce burden on schools, eliminate duplicative efforts, and provide statewide data to assist schools in addressing school climate issues and better direct their efforts.

(Support budget amendment submitted by Speaker's Select Committee and Governor's Children's Cabinet)

Recommendation 5

Amend the *Code of Virginia* to enable the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety under the Department of Criminal Justice Services to adopt and implement a case management tool for threat assessment teams to ensure that schools are able to collect important data, monitor outcomes, and track information over time. (House Select and Children's Cabinet)

(Support legislation submitted by Speaker's Select Committee and Governor's Children's Cabinet)

Recommendations on Training for School Resource Officers

Recommendation 1

Amend the *Code of Virginia* to require that all school divisions employing school resource officers have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the employing law enforcement agency consistent with the Model MOU from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. MOUs should be regularly reviewed and updated. (House Select and Children's Cabinet)

(Support legislation submitted by Speaker's Select Committee and Governor's Children's Cabinet. Additionally, send a letter of support to Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and Secretary of Public Education and the Speaker of the House of Delegates with the following recommendation to be included in the legislation: A local school district's MOU shall be reviewed between and signed off by a designated school administrator and newly added SRO each time a SRO is assigned to a school. This will ensure everyone knows what is in the MOU.)

Recommendation 2

Amend the *Code of Virginia* to require every school resource officer to receive SRO training approved by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety before beginning their assignment in a local school, with exceptions permitted for training availability and staffing exigencies. Encourage school administrators to attend this training with their assigned SRO.

(Legislation and budget amendment submitted by the Commission on Youth)

Recommendations on Best Practices on School Discipline

Recommendation 1

Amend the *Code of Virginia* to create a Commission on Student Mental Health. Recognizing that student mental health is a growing and multifaceted issue and that policy-making should be informed by adequate evidence and subject-matter expertise, direct the newly created Commission on Student Mental Health to study, among other topics, the: (House Select)

- a. Current school counselor-to-student ratio and whether the proposed realignment of counseling responsibilities is improving the delivery of direct student services;
- b. Feasibility and affordability of enhanced wrap-around mental health services in schools through partnerships with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Department of Medical Assistance Services, and Community Services Boards;
- c. Effectiveness of de-escalation and alternative disciplinary policies when interacting with students suffering from mental health challenges;
- d. Value of additional teacher training requirements on student mental health, such as mental health first aid.

(Support legislation submitted by Speaker's Select Committee)

**Recommendation 2**

Request the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety under the Department of Criminal Justice Services to develop online training on critical school and student safety issues that can be accessed by teachers (including provisional teachers), law enforcement, and school support staff who may not be able to attend in-person trainings. Training could include cultural competency, supporting special populations, the role of the SSOs/SROs, mental health awareness, Threat Assessment Teams, etc. (Children's Cabinet)

- a. Require at least one school administrator from each school to attend a comprehensive school safety training developed or approved by the Center.
- b. School divisions may require that teachers participate in certain trainings or modules as part of their in-service or re-certification requirements.

(By letter. Additionally, in the letter of support, recommend that as DCJS is developing an online training, they include a self-exam component to accompany the training.)

**IV. Update on the Governor's Children's Cabinet**

*First Lady Pamela Northam, Chair of the Children's Cabinet*

First Lady Pamela Northam came to the Commission on Youth meeting at 2:30pm to give her presentation. Ms. Northam gave an overview on the Children's Cabinet three priority areas: nutrition and food security, early childhood development and school readiness, and systems of care. The presentation can be found on the Commission's website under the December 4 meeting tab.

**V. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

The *Code of Virginia* requires that the Commission on Youth elect a chair each year (Section 30-174). Today we will be electing a chair and vice-chair.

**Nominations for Chair**

Delegate Peace nominated Delegate Bell for Chair, and was seconded. Delegate Bell was unanimously elected Chair.

**Nominations for Vice Chair**

Delegate Keam nominated Senator Marsden for Vice Chair, and was seconded. Senator Marsden was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

Commissioners thanked Senator Favola for her two years of service as Chair on the Commission. Senator Favola Agreed to chair the rest of the December 4 meeting.



**VI. Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports Presentation**

*Joseph Wharff, School Counseling Specialist Coordinator and  
Student Assistance Coordinator, Office of Student Services  
Virginia Department of Education*

Mr. Joseph Wharff from the Virginia Department of Education who is a School Counseling Specialist and Student Assistance Coordinator gave a presentation to the Commission on the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports. Commissioner Dede Goldsmith inquired about how schools are asked to take part in VTSS. Ms. Goldsmith would like to see more schools from the southwest involved. The presentation can be found on the Commission's website under the December 4 meeting tab.

**VII. Virginia Youth in Government**

*Nicholas Maggard, Student, Abingdon High School*

Nicholas Maggard, a high school student from Abingdon High School, gave a presentation on a concept to have high school students take part in a residency program in Richmond during the General Assembly Session. Commission on Youth members applauded Mr. Maggard for his commitment to citizen involvement as a youth. Members of the Commission provided Mr. Maggard several avenues for pursuing his goals. The presentation can be found on the Commission's website under the December 4 meeting tab.

**VIII. Adjourn**

The Commission on Youth meeting adjourned for the year.